

commuter flights in recent years, we must do everything we can to ensure the safety of those passengers.

Due to the growing competitiveness among airlines, the number of aircraft of all sizes that have entered the market is growing exponentially. At the same time, the limited FAA budget is already strapped. The Aviation Safety Protection Act would enable airline employees to aid the FAA in ensuring air travel remains safe without fear of reprisal.

The checkered safety record of ValuJet Airlines is just now coming to light. One can only wonder if this tragedy could have been prevented if an employee had come forward earlier to report safety concerns.

In light of this American tragedy, I urge Congress to expedite approval of the Aviation Safety Protection Act, so that we can begin to rebuild the public's confidence in our aviation industry.

□ 2115

ELIMINATING THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE IS NOT THE WAY TO GO

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHABOT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, the bill that has been under consideration on the floor of the House for the past few hours has been dealing with the defense of our Nation, and no one in this Chamber would think of unilaterally disarming our country militarily. So why is it, then, that the Republican leadership now proposes to eliminate in the budget debates coming up during the next 2 days the Department of Commerce and so unilaterally disarm us economically? Because this Department of Commerce under, first, Secretary Ron Brown and now his successor, this Department of Commerce has been turned into an efficient juggernaut advancing U.S. interests here and abroad economically.

Mr. Speaker, if I were a business leader in this country, a small- or mid-size business leader particularly, but also a CEO of a large corporation, I would be very, very concerned about this move to take the one agency in the Federal Government that has become very effective at promoting U.S. commerce and jobs and exports and dismantling it and eliminating some of its functions and shipping some of the functions off to other agencies and departments where there is not a smooth fit.

For instance, what would be eliminated or phased out? The advanced technology program. Well, certainly we do not need technology in our economy, do we? The manufacturing extension partnerships is like the old agricultural extension program for rural areas. This is manufacturing extension,

and it can be for rural areas but urban areas as well, particularly benefiting small- and mid-size businesses.

They would eliminate the U.S. Travel and Tourism Administration. Tourism is becoming one of the fastest growing industries in our country. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration. They would take the Economic Development Administration, which has been crucial in my State of West Virginia as well as every State in this country, they would take it and move it to the Small Business Administration, believing it would take only 25 employees to administer its many millions of dollars worth of grants.

The irony to this of course is the SBA, the Small Business Administration, and the EDA are not a compatible fit. The Small Business Administration deals with small business, and individual small businesses. The EDA, the Economic Development Administration, deals with the infrastructure that is necessary to help businesses grow. But it is not the same function at all.

Mr. Speaker, as I say, the business community should be greatly concerned. It should be greatly concerned at the idea that the International Trade Administration could be greatly phased down. For instance, it is estimated that half the State offices would have to be eliminated. It would reduce the support for the U.S. business community. It would terminate domestic services in one-half the States. It would lessen the ability to protect U.S. industries against unfair practices, such as dumping.

There are many, many areas of the Department of Commerce which would be, of course, either phased out or phased down or eliminated under this proposal.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to look at the achievements that the United States Department of Commerce, this department that is now sought to be eliminated over the next couple of days in the Republican leadership budget, I think it is very important to look at some of the accomplishments. Ron Brown was a heck of a leader for the United States and for the Department of Commerce. He created the first-ever national export strategy which brought \$80 billion worth of business deals, that is right, deals, contracts signed, jobs created, on the bottom line. That is what the Department of Commerce has been doing these last 3 years.

He championed the role of civilian technology by entering into \$1.5 billion of public-private partnerships, roughly a 50-50 split, 220 of these, to advance technology, increase the number of manufacturing extension centers in this country from 7 to 60. They benefit small- and mid-size businesses. U.S. merchandise exports went up 26 percent in 3 years, from 1993 to 1995.

He hosted the first-ever White House conference on travel and tourism. This is what you want a Department of

Commerce to be doing. This is what you want a Government agency to be doing, to be working in public-private partnerships, to be bringing home the bacon, to be creating jobs, working with the private sector. That is what our Department of Commerce has been doing.

So, what is the solution? What is the answer? Well, the bean counters on the other side now say eliminate the Department of Commerce, eliminate the Economic Development Administration, which, with its \$2.5 million of assistance to the Swearingen project in Martinsburg, WV, helped leverage \$130 million of investment so that the first jet manufacturing center in this country in many, many years is under construction right now and will create 800 jobs, good-paying jobs, when it is created.

That is what the Department of Commerce can do and is doing across this country. Their answer? Eliminate it, phase it out, break it up, ship it off. We do not like coordinated approaches. We do not like efficiency. We do not like somebody going out and actually bringing home the business. That is what this is about.

Mr. Speaker, I understand the motivations; there are no bad motivations. It may be a philosophical difference. Maybe they do not like success. Maybe it is just that they think that Government should not be involved in this type of activity. Eliminating the Department of Commerce is not the way to go.

TRIBUTE TO FORMER CIA DIRECTOR WILLIAM COLBY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to remind my colleagues and remind the American people of a great American, a spy who has come in from the cold, William Colby. Mr. Colby was memorialized today in a service that I had the honor of attending at the National Cathedral and sitting there among so many hundreds of family members, friends, world leaders, former colleagues of his and probably many average American citizens who had read about him in the newspaper, believed in what he had done, recognized him for the greatness that he embodied and simply came in and attended the memorial service.

As I sat there, I was reminded of the time that I have spent, that I have known Mr. Colby, first as a junior officer for several years during my tenure at the CIA. I had the honor of serving under him during the years that he served as DCI or Director of Central Intelligence. At the time I knew him probably simply by reputation as the boss, the man that headed the agency. I knew him by reputation for the long years of service that he had put in serving his country at the CIA and,